



# Building the Best Years

Youth Strategy 2018–2022





# Contents

- Message from the Mayor 3
- Summary 4
- Values and behaviours 5
- Building the Best Years 7
- Youth engagement 9
- Principles 11
- Working with youth service providers 11
- Strategy review 11
- Initiatives 13



## Message from the Mayor

In recent times, Baw Baw Shire has experienced a significant increase in our young population with sixteen per cent residents aged between 12 and 25 years. This totals around 7,800 young people who are experiencing some of the most exciting and possibly the most challenging years of their life.

Council is proud to present its 2018 Youth Strategy: Building the Best Years.

The strategy outlines a renewed focus on how Council engages with, supports and advocates for young people in Baw Baw Shire. The Youth Strategy reflects the direction of our Community Vision and Council Plan, building on five key pillars:

- Youth leadership
- Participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Advocacy
- Innovation

Under the guidance of the Youth Strategy, Council will partner with young people, key agencies and the community to assist young people to achieve their goals and aspirations.

I look forward to working with our community and young people to deliver the actions in this strategy.

**Mayor of Baw Baw Shire  
Councillor Mikaela Power  
2018**



## Summary

The Council Plan 2017-21 includes a strategy to determine youth service provision to support youth in Baw Baw.

Community engagement with over 600 young people, and key service providers in April 2018 provided local data that has become the basis for the initiatives in this document.

Improvements in youth leadership, participation in education, training and employment, health and wellbeing, advocacy and innovation are expected if the actions are delivered over the next four years.

### Acknowledgment of Country

Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land that makes up Baw Baw Shire. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present.

### Working safely

Council is committed to providing a safe working environment that embraces and values child safety, diversity and inclusion.

### Commitment to child safety

Baw Baw Shire Council is committed to the safety of all children and young people. This Strategy will strictly adhere to Council's Child Safety Policy. In addition, this strategy forms part of Council's work towards meeting Child Safe Standards, particularly standard number seven.

Child Safe Standards, particularly standard number seven underpins the philosophy of children and young peoples' participation, empowerment and their ability to speak up when feeling vulnerable or threatened.

# Values and behaviours

Through its vision, mission and values Council commits to working towards the best possible outcomes for the Baw Baw community.

## Our vision

Happy, healthy people sharing prosperity and knowledge from living sustainably and in harmony with our rural identity, thriving villages, productive and inspiring landscapes.

## Our mission

Leaders in delivering quality, innovative and community focused services today that make a difference for tomorrow.

## Core values

### Community focused

Accessible, responsive (we're here to help), can do attitude, communicative, empathetic.

### Integrity

Equitable, honest, ethical, transparent.

### Respect

Listening, compassionate, open minded, understanding, patient.

### Pride

Caring, enthusiastic, inspiring, accountable.

### Innovation

Creative, bold, challenging, flexible.

### Collaboration

Partnering, building productive relationships, inclusive.



# Building the best years

## Purpose

This document outlines Council's commitment and key initiatives to promote and support the health and wellbeing of young people (aged 12-25 years) in Baw Baw Shire.

The Strategy's development has been guided by Council's Youth Policy 2018.

## Relationship to other key documents

The Youth Strategy establishes a link to the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan. It intends to work closely with relevant strategies of Health and Wellbeing Plan (see figure 1).

## Young people in Baw Baw

In Baw Baw, sixteen percent of people are aged 12-25 years old. This amounts to over 7,800 young people (see figure 2).

Young people care about their families, friends and their environments. They are interested in their community and have valuable insights and knowledge. Young people use education services, public transport and public spaces, sports and entertainment venues, retail, and are engaged in learning, employment and parenting.



Figure 1: Relationships between key documents.

Baw Baw population by life stages, 2016 census data

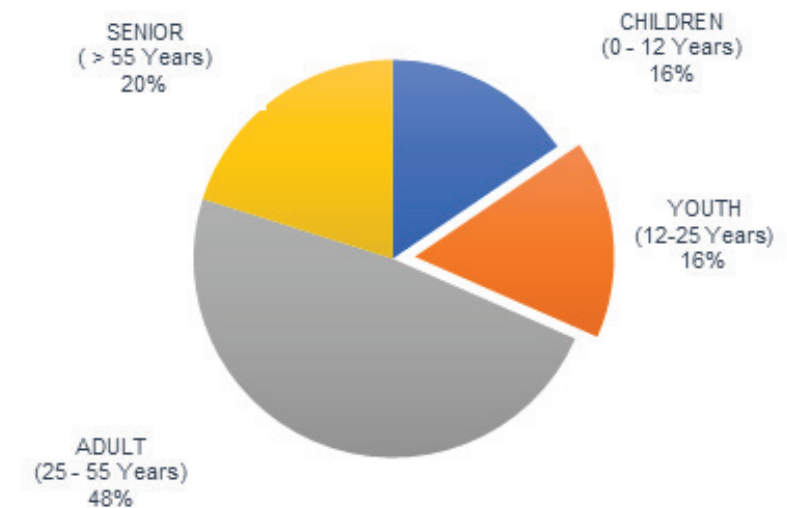


Figure 2: Baw Baw population by life stages, 2016 Census data.

# Youth engagement

## Overview

Community engagement was undertaken in April 2018 to gather information to support the development of this document. Using an online survey and face-to-face sessions in schools, feedback was received from approximately 600 young people across Baw Baw Shire.

### Gender

- 60% female
- 39% male
- 1% undisclosed

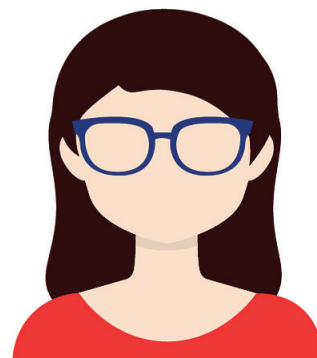
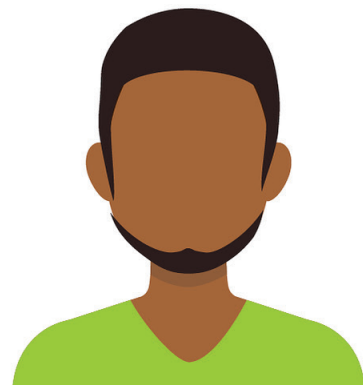
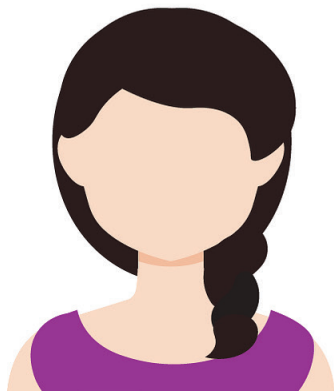
### Age

- 82% school age (12–18 years)
- 15% aged 19–25 years
- 3% parent or carer of a young person

### Cultural background

- 93% Australian
- 3% Young Aboriginal people
- 5% Culturally and linguistically diverse

The survey design let people answer in more than one category.



## Key feedback

### Likes

What do young people appreciate about living in Baw Baw?

- On the train line
- Rural/country/nature
- Strong sense of community

### Relationships

Who are the most important people to young people?

- Family
- Friends
- Teachers

### Health and wellbeing priorities

What are the Health and Wellbeing priorities for young people?

- More community events/activities
- More parks/trails/green spaces
- Greater access to mental health services

### Concerns

What worries young people most?

- Public transport
- Going to University
- Personal safety
- Drugs
- Keeping rural/country feel
- Family violence

### Barriers

What are the blockers to fulfilling aspirations?

- Public transport
- Activities, entertainment, things to do
- Employment/University
- Personal Safety
- Drugs

***A huge thanks to you, our local youth who took part in the Baw Baw Shire Council youth engagement forums. Your ideas will now help us develop a plan for improving the way Council currently support young people living in our Shire.***

# Principles

## Youth Policy

Baw Baw Shire Council's Youth Policy includes five principles:

- 1. Youth leadership:** Fostering relationships and partnerships with community stakeholders and different tiers of government to actively promote youth leadership.
- 2. Participation:** Engaging young people and improving their access to safely participate in their community, education, training, employment programs and services.
- 3. Health and wellbeing:** Integrating initiatives that improve health outcomes.
- 4. Advocacy:** Advocating for young people at relevant forums and providing advice to other levels of government.
- 5. Innovation:** Responding effectively to changing needs.

## Strategy review

This Strategy's key initiatives will be internally reviewed and reported on annually by the Youth Officer. A performance monitoring plan will be incorporated in the first annual review.

A formal review and revision of Baw Baw Youth Strategy will be conducted in four years from the date of adoption.

## Working with youth service providers

Key service providers have contributed to the development of this document.

Council will continue to build on existing relationships with relevant youth service providers in Baw Baw.

Council will also seek to make new relationships with other organisations when the action requires that.

The broad objectives of the youth service providers are to:

- Increase awareness of existing youth services
- Support and strengthen the "Communities That Care Partnership"
- Provide youth focused events
- Continue to promote the positive profile of Youth in Baw Baw.



# Initiatives

Initiatives in the Youth Strategy 2018–2022 are aligned with the five key principles of Council's Youth Policy.

## Youth leadership

**Goal: Fostering relationships and partnerships with community stakeholders and different tiers of government to actively promote youth leadership.**

1.1 Lead the Baw Baw Youth Network (BBYN) and provide administrative support to establish a relationship with Council's Health and Wellbeing Advisory committee for catering young people's service need.  
*Time line: Short term.*

1.2 Continue to support Communities That Care (CTC) project through grant writing and selected project delivery.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

1.3 Develop and implement a Youth Leadership Initiative project to build capacity of young people.  
*Time line: Short term.*

1.4 Deliver training on meeting procedures, leadership styles, networking, advocacy and working with stakeholders as part of Youth Leadership Initiative project.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

1.5 Investigate and partner in a 'Youth Mentoring Program' in Baw Baw.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

## Participation

**Goal: Engaging young people and improving their access to safely participate in their community, education, training, employment programs and services.**

2.1 Implement FReeZA program following funding guidelines.  
*Time line: Short term.*

2.2 Consider issues of cost, distance and transport when providing services and opportunities for young people.  
*Time line: Short term.*

2.3 Investigate local projects and programs that increase young people's education, training and employment opportunities.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

2.4 Consider young people's needs in Community Hubs Strategy (project in development).  
*Time line: Medium term.*

2.5 Provide specialist skills to build 'youth consultation' as part of community engagement in relevant Council projects.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

2.6 Continue to provide spaces and places for young people to meet their recreational need (such as pools, skate events, sports fields etc.).  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

2.7 Continue to provide opportunities for young people to learn, explore, share and create through arts and cultural activities, projects and events.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

2.8 Consider young people when planning for emergencies, through participation in municipal level planning committees.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

2.9 Continue to support schools to educate young people on Environmental Sustainability initiatives, events and actions.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

2.10 Continue to develop work-ready skills in young people through work experience and volunteering opportunities.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

2.11 Continue to host Citizenship Ceremony's for young people residing in Baw Baw Shire.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*



## Health and wellbeing

### Goal: Integrating initiatives that improve health outcomes.

3.1 Consider action(s) in the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan that reduce harm from family violence for youth.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

3.2 Consider action(s) in the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan that promote better mental health for youth.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

3.3 Maintain appropriate connection with young people through “Public Health” programs and actions.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

3.4 Continue to support the transition of young people with a disability who are NDIS-eligible from HACC PYP, as defined in Council’s transition plan.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

3.5 Continue to provide Home and Community Care Program for Younger People (HACC PYP) support services to eligible young people while funding is available.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

3.6 Continue to provide assessment services for young people with a disability who are not eligible under the NDIS.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

3.7 Continue to educate organisations on Councils Child Safety policy to serve the best interest of children and young people.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

3.8 Continue to educate and provide services to young people in relation to road safety through our partnership with Vic Roads.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

## Advocacy

### Goal: Advocating for young people at relevant forums and providing advice to other levels of government.

4.1 Promote youth led advocacy to address the needs of young people in other levels of government to ensure emerging health, housing affordability issues are addressed.  
*Time line: Long term.*

4.2 Advocate for public transport which caters for the needs of all young people in Baw Baw, including remote communities. Vic Roads.  
*Time line: Long term.*

## Innovation

### Goal: Responding effectively to changing needs.

5.1 Provide advice to Council on best practise for communications with young people considering technology and social media platforms.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

5.3 Continue to provide young people with complimentary access to technology, Wi-Fi and books through our partnership with the West Gippsland Regional Library Corporation.  
*Time line: Ongoing.*

5.2 Provide information to research initiatives that benefit young people.  
*Time line: Medium term.*

---

*i Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census*

*ii Baw Baw Shire Council, Community consultation data, April 2018*